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Maine Gay Task Force Newsletter, Vol.2, [No.07] (July 1975)

Coalition of Organizations

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MAINE GAY TASK FORCE

NEWSLETTER

MAIL: BOX 4542, PORTLAND, ME. 04112 - OFFICE: 193 MIDDLE ST. PORTLAND

CRIMINAL CODE - PASSED!!!

The laws against homosexuals have been repealed by the new criminal code enacted by the Maine legislature on June 16, 1975. The code was passed unanimously by the Maine Senate and by a vote of 123 to 18 in the House. However, the new laws, which were approved and signed by Governor Longley three days later, do not go into effect until March 1, 1976.

Basically, the new code makes all sexual acts between consenting adults legal. Sexual relations with anyone under the age of 14 are proscribed and subject to 10 or more years imprisonment. Sexual relations with persons over 14 and under 18 years of age are legal only if both parties are within 3 years of each others' ages--violation of this section is subject to a jail term of from 3 to 5 years. Sexual acts in a public place--which includes a motor vehicle parked on a public way--and public nudity, remain illegal under the new code.

While the repeal of the laws against Gay people are welcome and signify a victory for us, our fight is just beginning. In some states, but not all, where similar laws

have been enacted, the decriminalization of homosexual acts have resulted in increased harrassment and oppression of Gay people. When Colorado enacted its new criminal code in 1971, the Denver police began harrassing people in Gay bars, enforcing local ordinances against solicitation to engage in sexual relations, and assigning vice squad members to entrap Gay people. This resulted in numerous arrests under trumped-up charges until the Colorado courts declared the ordinances unconstitutional. In California, which has just enacted a law similar to ours, Los Angeles police have stepped up their traditional efforts to oppress Gay people, while that state's numerous conservative religious sects have joined in a major effort to have the new laws voted on in a public referendum.

While we do not expect any major effort to harrass Gay people in Maine as a result of the new criminal code, it is important to remember that local police departments or individual police may take it upon themselves to act out their homophobia by arresting or otherwise intimidating us. Be happy but be careful.

1975 (JULY) 1975

THE CUMBERLAND COUNTY CURMUDGEON
by S.W. Henderson

Surviving Hard Times

We are living through hard times, both as individuals and as a movement. Everyone knows about the economic problems, so there is no reason to belabor that subject. Sometimes, though, we feel as exhausted in energy as we are in wealth. Every activist, including Yours Truly, reaches a point where one is ready to quit from sheer frustration. Press releases don't get printed, phone calls don't get answered, the same people tote the barge and lift the bale to get the Newsletter out, and one wonders whether the whole thing is worth it. At times like these, I think it is helpful to remember a thing one of my history profs said back at good ole U. of Me. (ah, the days when one had a fellowship and didn't have to start job-hunting for two years). The prof was talking about the American Revolutionists during the early 1770's, a time when there were few issues to get hold of and it was hard to keep the movement alive. The radicals of that time kept their core organization together, snapped at every possible lead that came their way, and sure enough, sooner or later the British gave them a real issue. We in this bicentennial (not to be confused with buy-centennial) year should take a hint from our radical ancestors. Keep the Gay movement alive at all costs, even if it consists of three people putting out the Rag, and when the times are right, people will coalesce around that core group.

There is another reason why we Gays should stick together during hard times, and that is to help one another as people. One of the goals of our movement, as I see it, is to devise alternate institutions to some of the established ones that don't seem to be working very well. One of the things I see us doing is taking the old peasant institution of communal work and mutual assistance and adapting it to current needs. The making of the MGTFF quilt, which was raffled off at Symposium II, was one example. Another is the way the MGTFF regulars help each other move furniture in our frequent changes of domicile. We need mutual assistance in this frequently impersonal society. Perhaps, hopefully, we are beginning to develop communities. At any rate, sticking together as a movement and as people is one good way to survive hard times.

On The Line:

Five members of M.G.T.F. appeared on a Channel 6 talk show, "On The Line," hosted by John Dougherty, to answer questions called in by the viewing audience.

The Task Force members were: Deborah Johnsen, Susan Breeding, Wendy Ashley, Steve Bull and Stan Fortuna. All did well in the face of adversity. "Do you think that you will ever turn normal?" and "You can't help those who don't want to be helped" are examples of viewers remarks and questions. The five M.G.T.F. members proved their expertise, kept their composure and consequently initiated a considerable response from the viewing audience. As a result of the show, the new M.G.T.F. office received several phone calls and letters from Gay people asking for more information and advice about being Gay. An offer for a two-hour WCSH radio program, "Gab With Tabb," hosted by Steve Tabb (no less) came as a result of the television appearance. Stan Fortuna and Deborah Johnsen will participate in this July 9 program.

Perhaps the most important result of the program is the increased awareness and raised consciousness of the viewers and the

broadcasters. John Dougherty himself stated that he had learned something about Gay people and changed some of his views as a result of the experience. The station personnel in charge were generally pleased with the show. The more the public is exposed to the fact that there are Lesbians and Gay men living a proud, positive and healthy lifestyle, the closer we, the Gay public, are going to be attaining our civil rights. Most importantly, we shall be able to cast off our cloak of invisibility.

PLEASE NOTE!!!

At considerable expense the Newsletter has begun its first Post Card Survey to determine what our readers think about us: your advice, criticism, suggestions, cheer, or whatever. A cross-section of response will be printed in a future edition, using the writer's initials (if any.) In one word or more, your ideas will indicate how the Newsletter might better serve the Gay community and, incidentally, will tell us if surveys like this are viable.

Thanks for your time and effort.

When I was recently asked at gunpoint by the persuasive MGTF Literary Coordinators if I had planned to enlighten this Newsletter with a "critical review" of a book, newspaper, article, or similar subject I immediately hesitated. And with good reason: not only had the trunk of my shit-green Pinto become weighted with unread Sunday NY Times, but worse, an unexplained relapse in my basic motor-skill/signal-recognition level (aggravated by a Burger King decision to up the mercury content) often made it useless to deal with even the most routine bumper sticker let alone those predictable Press Herald editorials that say "This is not to imply that we are not uncomfortable with day-glo platform sneakers. Indeed, we see this latest ostentation of the fashionably dressed as" (One bumper sticker I agree with says READ BOOKS, NOT BUMPER STICKERS, which is put out by a library group, but I digress.) The point of all this mad chatter, Patient Reader, is that my mind has taken to wandering of late, to say the least. However, even errant gray matter can get it together when Duty Knocks, or so we all try. Now that you're advised, let us turn to the subject at hand.

1975 MAINE OFFICIAL TRANSPORTATION MAP By the Department of Transportation 2pp. Published by the State of Maine. By authority of R S.. 1964, T23, Sec. 1351 (for free distribution)

With several mouth-watering exceptions (which we'll get into later) the overall content of the 1975 Maine Roadmap appears to be an obvious rehash of last year's edition. This unfortunate redundancy will agitate persons who have already read previous copies but need not be a total disappointment and/or Bummer Scene. As it happens, the anonymous authors have taken obvious pains to include information that, if not Kritical, is at least Partially Redeeming.

One fine feature is the U.M.T. Grid Ticks. In case you didn't notice, the border of the map is discreetly marked with these blue U.M.T.s, which are rumored to measure 10,000 meters (in scale, of course). According to an ALA spokesperson, the ten-thousand meter delineation is less important to Maine motorists in light of the recently reduced speed limits. The authors have countered this argument with the observation that the grid ticks are invaluable to commercial airlines and state-run ferries given today's shortage of more conventional navigational aids. (Indeed, according to secret

FAA documents made available to us, one Delta pilot regularly flies from Bangor to Presque Isle equipped with only a compass, a St. Christopher medallion, and a "State o' Maine" paper place mat.)

Population Symbols are not only well-delineated but are in themselves micro/geopolitical statements. A small open circle means that the town numbers LESS THAN 10 PEOPLE. A circle with a tiny enclosed dot means 10 TO 100. A circle with an enclosed concentric ring is 100 TO 500. A circle with a large black dot means 500 TO 1000. A circle with an enclosed lower-case Lambda indicates that the town is the PO address of an MGTF affiliate.. A circle with a contained peace symbol informs the reader that the municipality voted over 45% for McGovern in 1972. Towns with fluoridated water are set in bold type and county seats are underlined. A word of caution: if the town is designated by a circle with :) which is the familiar Happy Face (turn Newsletter 90 degrees clockwise) then the area specializes in ripping-off Tourists and Stray Travellers not familiar with the Setup. Major metro areas -all 28 of them- are appropriately bathed in large glops of Golden Arch Yellow. (Some towns cheat on this.)

Several portions of the State's highways have been officially designated in the '75 Roadmap as Scenic. Six such stretches have been honored in this manner, up from just three 2 years ago. Inasmuch as beauty is not only in the eyeballs of the beholder but also extremely relative in a state like Maine, I would suggest that the editors of next year's copy designate instead the Nonscenic Highways. This would seem less capricious and provide for a less cluttered map of the future. ("Sour Grapes," some would say, but I would remind them that no one's outlook can be unaffected by the Era into which we are entering; i.e.: The Age of the Half-Empty Glass. And it is contagious.)

Under NO circumstances should a hungry driver view the reverse side of the map: one-third of the back page is devoted to mouth-watering, full-color photographs of apple squares, lobster, blueberry pie, crispy oven chicken, sardine rarebit, oven baked beans, stuffed eggs, baked potatoes, and steamed clams. The only thing lacking is a Scratch and Sniff panel. I wonder how many drivers have unwittingly flirted with Twisted Wreckage while idly dreaming of succulent steamers or

(continued p. 5)

OPINION:

THE FRONT RUNNER COMES IN LAST

The cover of the paperback version of The Front Runner boasts that it is "a candid look into the psychological and physical experience of the new gay world..." That's a pretty heavy claim, so I read the book to see if it lived up to these proclamations. It failed miserably.

First of all, I don't think Patricia Nell Warren has any business writing a book which claims to capture the essence of the Gay male psyche. Warren is a (presumably) straight woman; how can she possibly have profound knowledge of what the Gay male experience means? The book merely proves that she doesn't. (I would likewise be skeptical of a male writing about the Lesbian experience, a white about Blacks, etc.)

In short, The Front Runner tells the story of a love relationship between two Gay men: Billy Sive, a college runner, and his coach, Harlan Brown. The two get "married" and, surrounded by controversy, work their way to the '76 Olympics where disaster strikes during Billy's race. Later, Betsy, their Lesbian friend (and the only Gay woman in the novel), agrees to a plan to have a child through artificial insemination by Billy's sperm. Love conquers all...

I was continually irritated with the book, and found myself becoming increasingly contemptuous of it as I read on. It presents a dishonest picture of Gay men as carbon copies of their straight counterparts with one crucial capital-D-Difference, i.e. the characters have not rooted out the Man. Traditional masculinity and femininity are considered desirable, effeminacy is bad, and Warren's ideal of "good" and "evil" is preached constantly. Consider: here, marriage is necessary in order to give a relationship dignity; orgies and sex without love are somehow perverse; monogamy is held in esteem for its own sake (the idea of "fidelity"). These views are never challenged for what many of us have come to realize: mirror images of straight morality which pertain little to Gay men. The relationship between Billy and Harlan is in itself far from ideal, being fraught with possessiveness, distrust and jealousy ("Had Billy shown...interest in any of them, ...I might have been capable of killing him.") Warren takes pains to make it explicitly clear that kisses between Betsy and the men are "on the cheek." This, admittedly, is a minor point but one that bothers me, as it implies an unspoken rule that Gay men never lip-kiss Lesbians, which is totally absurd. But then, women are the subject of disdain through-

out the book.

Not only is the sexist language deplorable ("girls" and "foxes" for "women"), but sexism shows up on every level. Billy's father's transvestite lover OD's on sleeping pills "just like a woman." At one point Harlan makes the "profound" observation that "men give and women take." And then there's Betsy Heden who is introduced as a "militant Lesbian," but by the final chapter she is Harlan's aproned housekeeper, dressing her boy-baby in blue. "Betsy doesn't seem very interested in sex," says Harlan, and as far as we know she is celibate throughout, which only perpetuates the Man's myth of women's sexuality, or lack thereof. Also Betsy reveals that she had always hated men before she met Billy. Since there is no evidence of her love of women, the reader might conclude that "Lesbian" equals "man-hater." Actually the sole reason for Betsy's existence is to be a convenient baby-machine for a posthumous insemination, a rather bizarre situation that might have been avoided had Billy and Harlan adopted. AS the Gay Civil Rights Bill had been passed, they certainly should have been able to.

To be fair, The Front Runner does portray, sometimes quite effectively, the homophobic tendencies of society, as Billy and Harlan fight discrimination after discrimination. To anyone who doesn't believe that we really are oppressed, the book says, "See? Gays really are hated!" (Will revelations ever cease?) Also a benevolent attempt is made to show that Gays are not one-eyed monsters, but can actually be quite human. Boring maybe, but human. The straight reader might find her/himself becoming somewhat compassionate regarding the Gay issue. However, I, as a Gay male, find it impossible to identify with these wooden characters, their unnatural dialogue, their feelings and their life situations. They are not realistic to me, or even likeable. The "humor" interspersed here and there is amazingly unfunny.

I am very uncomfortable with The Front Runner's obsessions with competition and with the nuclear family. Here, competition is wor-

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FRONT RUNNER (cont.)

shipped, as the subject matter -- athletics -- dictates. But societal competition is a basic way by which men are forced to be masculine -- aggressive, women to be feminine -- servile. An atmosphere so rife with competition is not conducive to human growth and liberation, as it stifles many of the natural tendencies within the broader spectrum of human personality. Harlan and Billy's consuming need for a family built on the het model would be laughable if it were not so damned offensive. Granted, many of us need "family," but most of us opt for one composed of loving friends chosen to meet that need, or one which includes children from a former heterosexualy-oriented situation, and not necessarily the nuclear family that heterosexist society presents to us as the highest goal. Traditional family also oppresses Gays and women; Gays are seen as threats to family structure, while it can virtually enslave women and cause their loss of selfhood. But, according to Warren, this is something to be strived for at all costs.

The underlying theme of The Front Runner is "Gays are just like straights with one "Difference." Patricia Nell Warren's Gays might be, but I find it a distorted, offensive portrayal, certainly an unenlightened one.

John Frank

LITERARY CORNER (cont.)

an over-sized slice of blueberry pie.

The Official Roadmap is available, free of charge, at all Turnpike tollbooths and at most information bureaus and everywhere else. If you are lucky enough not to own a car or are depressingly familiar with the highway pattern, you should know that the roadmap also includes a remarkable color photograph of the State's First Family, suitable for many purposes, and an inspirational letter personally signed by the Governor Himself. Mail orders may be sent to the Department of Transportation, Augusta, Maine, 04330. Tell 'em you read about it in the Newsletter.

Hear JADE AND SARSAPARILLA every weekend through Labor Day at Piggy's on Shankpainter Road in P'town.

"WOMANHOOD IS AN ENTITY"
Gigi Cohen

She flies low, high and around. When she gets close enough to me, I can see her face and hands more clearly. I can get glimpses of her unadorned beauty, and the starkness of her bold womanly body. She flies low, high and around. Today she entered my body, and strangely made herself at home, taking for granted that this is her birthright. She flies low, high and around. When I call out to her, ask her to come to me, she resists and disappears. I have lost sight of her and forgotten her smile. I will not call out to her again; I will wait until she comes on her own. It is quite enough, for me now, to know that she is there.

She flies low, high and around. On her own, she is not afraid; she could withstand and endure beyond comprehension, all that comes her way. Her essence is that of a paradox, of young and old, male and female, ignorant and wise, yet she finds this to be in harmony.

She flies low, high and around. I am strongly attracted to her; I turn on, experience living, breathing, and oneness, when she enters my body. O woman that flies high in the sky. I have waited many lifetimes for your strength to shine in me. Your movement reflects your certainty. You can and do, you were and are, you had and have, and will become much more!!! You need not, you want not, you are and do, and can have it all!!!! You are the cup, clean, new and empty, ready to be filled.

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BICENTENNIAL CONFERENCE on Gays and the Federal Government will be held on Columbus Day weekend, 10-14 October 1975. Issues to be covered include the national civil rights bill, immigration and naturalization, Federal funding for Gay projects, privacy, Federal prisons, military and civil service employment, and others. For complete information, contact: Bicentennial Conference, Gay Activists Alliance of Washington, Box 2554, Washington, D.C., 20013.

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SHARE APARTMENT:

"22 yr. old male attending Univ. at Augusta this fall. Would like info. on small, furnished apt. in Waterville-Augusta area. Or share expenses on reasonably priced two bedroom apt. with another male." Send details to: Reginald Porter RFD#3, Box73 Skowhegan, Me. 04976

SUSAN SAXE DEFENSE FUND

From: SUSAN SAXE DEFENSE FUND
c/o Lawyer's Guild
1427 Walnut Street
Philadelphia, PA 19102

To All Our Sisters and Concerned Brothers:

We need your help. In late March, Susan Saxe, a woman who is a revolutionary, a lesbian, and a feminist, was arrested here in Philadelphia. On June 9, 1975, she plead guilty "in the context of the laws of the United States" to all the federal charges against her, which included aiding and abetting in a Philadelphia bank robbery & theft of classified government documents from a National Guard Armory.

We feel that Susan's statement is the best expression there could be of why she decided to plead guilty & why she believes her plea to be a victory. For those of us in the courtroom at the time she read the statement, there was a strong affirmation of Susan's feminism and our own. It was the first day of joy & defiance in the tedious weeks of pretrial work.

Please reprint and circulate copies of Susan's statement. Talk about it, think about it. These are hard things to deal with and hard times. But we trust that you will decide to support the work that must be done in Boston and help cover some of the expenses already incurred. We will be letting you know how the Defense Fund is doing and what's happening with respect to the Boston trial (which should begin in the early fall). We desperately need whatever you can give. Checks may be addressed to the above address.

STATEMENT OF SUSAN SAXE

June 9, 1975

The most significant point of this plea agreement is that the United States government realizes that I am not and never will be a collaborator. I have made it clear to them that if I am called as a witness in any government proceeding, I will refuse to testify. The government has agreed that I will not be held in contempt for this refusal. In return, I have agreed to enter a guilty plea and receive a ten year and a two year sentence. The length of the sentences is a direct result of my refusal to talk.

Today I am in effect pleading guilty in federal court to charges stemming from a period of five years ago when I believed, as I still do, that armed struggle against the American State was a valid and necessary escalation of the politics of the '60's. I understood at the time that the American Government was the most dangerous, powerful, organized, violent opponent of people's liberation around the world. I also felt at the time that the liberation of women, to which I was already deeply and personally committed, could best be achieved by our full participation in and leadership of what I then perceived as a worldwide humanistic economic and cultural revolution led by the Third World and aimed against the Yankee Empire.

Over the course of the last five years, four and a half of which have been lived underground in Amerika, I, like many other women who came to politics through socialist, anti-racist, and anti-imperialist causes, have changed, have grown, have emerged a feminist. Like these thousands of other sisters, I am no longer content to be just one strong woman fighting for a revolution which, though it is just and necessary, does not speak to my own highest aspirations, my own most personal and immediate needs. Over the past five years, then, I have emerged a feminist, a lesbian, a woman-identified woman. This was not a "conversion," but a development, a natural process that followed my previous commitment as day follows night.

There have been many women throughout herstory who have taken great risks, put great faith and energy into movements that spoke to our liberation as workers, as poor people, as members of every oppressed race and class, as everything but women. And while many of these struggles have moved our people forward, have improved our real lives in concrete ways, and therefore, by definition been in the interest of women, no struggle but our own, independent of others, and just and necessary in its own right can ever hope to meet all our needs. We

(Continued on next page)

have a right to this struggle, a right to self-determination and self-definition as women, for women, a right to a new world of our own creation.

I am only one of many women who have come through these changes in the past several years. Unlike many others, though, a few of us have been brought up sharply, face to face with our past and had to confront our former selves, for better or for worse in the public eye and under rather dramatic and serious circumstances. At the same time and around the same issues, a deep and significant split has developed in the women's movement. On the one hand are women who like Jane Alpert feel that the Amerikan system can peacefully accommodate their feminist demands and that women as women have no obligation to support or protect any peoples' struggle that is not explicitly feminist in ideology or even separatist in practice. These women feel that it is permissible, even desirable, to collaborate with the state in the name of feminism, and that it is in the interest of feminist revolution to dissociate itself from any forces or individuals which are identified as enemies of the state on the assumption that it is we who bring down state repression on a movement that otherwise could comfortably exist within the belly of the beast.

On the other hand, are we women whose growth into feminism has made us even more determined not to give in, not to accommodate ourselves to Amerika, not to collaborate against sisters and brothers who are our natural allies in revolution, not to repudiate our past, cut ourselves off at our own roots. For me, feminism is a commitment to be even more radical, to strike more deeply at the root of our oppression. My feminism does not make me regret economic "crimes" against one institution of capitalism; it makes me even more determined to see that whole system uprooted forever. My feminism does not make me regret the theft of classified documents that exposed the U.S. government's treachery against the people, including U.S. Army O Plan G - Operation Geronimo Bravo - contingency plans for counterinsurgency operations against the civilian population of the Boston area in the event of martial law. My feminism doesn't make me regret the destruction of a single National Guard Armory; it only makes me wish to see every last vestige of patriarchal militarism permanently blotted from the face of the earth.

But most importantly, my feminism does not permit me to collaborate with the Man in order to reduce the amount of time I will have to spend in his prisons. The agreement I am entering into today is made on the condition that I will never testify against Kathy Powers or give any information concerning anyone I have known or known about in the past five years. And the ten year and two year sentences are based on the government's understanding that I will give them nothing, ever, not in ten years, not in a hundred years.

My feminism does not drive me into the arms of the state, but even further from it.

My guilty plea is predicated upon my understanding that as of this date the government has agreed to end its investigations in Philadelphia. This means no grand jury, no harboring prosecutions, no legal torture of sisters who refuse to speak to the FBI. The credit for this victory goes to the feminist community here, and to the sisters in New Haven, Connecticut and in Lexington, Kentucky, whose courage in the face of FBI and government harassment has been an example to us all. Their resistance has given us time to prepare to protect our communities, our sisters, and ourselves. The government would never have agreed to end its investigation here if it had any hope of success. We have made it clear to them that we are together and unafraid, that our community is closed to their threats, closed to their lies, closed to divisive tactics, that we will stand together and protect what is ours, our homes, our organizations, our friends and lovers, our private lives. The enemy cannot isolate and terrorize us, cannot walk among us with impunity.

We have shown those few desperate, self-serving terrified women who have urged us to collaborate, to rush to preserve ourselves as individuals, to dissociate ourselves from anyone who poses a real threat to the state, we have shown these frightened women that there is an alternative. When we place the blame for repression squarely on the enemy, not on his targets, when we unite to oppose him, he can be driven away. But when we run to the Man for shelter, when we betray ourselves to appease him, we only expose others to his tactics and increase the danger to us all.

Feminism is not collaboration. Ellen Grusse, Terry Turgeon and Diana Perkins in New Haven, Gail Cohee, Debbie Hands, Linda Link, Jill Raymond, Marla Seymour and a gay brother James Carey Junkin in Lexington have shown us the way. Jill Raymond is still imprisoned in a Kentucky hell-hole and Ellen, Terry, and Diana still face more time in the pastel fascism of Niantic Prison in Connecticut. Write to these sisters, send love and encouragement. Let them know about our victory here and about their role in making it possible. Support them the whole time they are in jail and when they get out, invite them to Philly for a huge celebration. Our victories should be marked and our heras honored.

And now, I'd like to reaffirm the statement I made at the time of my arrest:

First, a greeting of love and strength to all my sisters - courage for our warriors, hope for our people and especially for all my sisters and brothers underground in Amerika. Keep on fighting, stay free, stay strong. I promise you a courage to match your own. I intend to fight on in every way as a Lesbian, a feminist, an Amazon.

The love that I share with my sisters, my people, is a far more powerful weapon than any the police state can bring to bear against us.

What else can I say but, once again, that I love you. We are strong and we are not afraid.

CIVIL SERVICE GUIDELINES ON GAYS
(From the Boston Globe, 3 July, 1975)

The Civil Service Commission said yesterday that homosexuals may not be arbitrarily denied Federal jobs.

Only if a person's homosexuality interferes with her or his work may the employee be fired, the commission said in new employment guidelines complying with recent Federal court decisions on the issue.

The guidelines also covered drug abuse, alcohol, misconduct in previous jobs, loyalty and criminal records.

They said that participation in protest of such issues as the Vietnam war or school busing would not be considered disloyal behavior.

Drug abuse, alcoholism and previous criminal records should be considered case by case, they added.

The commission controls employment conditions for millions of Federal workers, excluding such special categories as the FBI, CIA, foreign service specialists at the State Department and the military services.

DANCE: The LAMBDA people are sponsoring another Gay dance. The

Unitarian-Universalist Church on Pleasant St. in Brunswick will be the place, on Saturday, 2 August, from 9pm to 1am. We ask for a

\$1.00 donation, if you have it. Those persons unable to attend will miss some really fine dance music. The tapes are being changed.

MGTF PANEL AT MAINE CONFERENCE
ON HUMAN SERVICES

Seven members of the Maine Gay Task Force will serve on a panel at the Maine Conference on Human Services on Monday, August 25, at 10:30-11:30 a.m. and 2:30-5:00 p.m.

For complete information on the conference, contact the Maine Conference on Human Services, P.O. Box 30, Bath, Maine 04530.

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CALENDAR

2 Aug. - Gay dance, Unitarian Church, Pleasant St., Brunswick, 9:00 p.m. - 1:00 a.m. \$1 donation requested, but no one will be turned away.

2 August - Ditto.

3 August - MGTF meeting at 193 Middle St., Portland, 1:00 p.m. If door is locked, call 773-5530.

24-26 August - Maine Conference on Human Services, St. Francis College, Biddeford. See elsewhere in this issue for MGTF workshop here.

LETTERS

Dear Friends,

Your newsletter was full of good news- It was an emotional experience reading 'bout the June 16 decriminalization of sex relations between consenting adults of the same sex in the state of Maine. Congratulations. This probably came about because of all the hard work of M.G.T.F. and all the other fine groups in Maine-

The next day, after reading the good news, I experienced some negative thoughts, which I don't really wish to share - but feel I must. Please try to bear with me.

Assuming the Governor signs the Code, it is due not to take effect until March 1, 1976, which gives all those among the public who oppose the reform measures, plenty of time to mount an ugly campaign to repeal the law, or am I being unduly cynical? Will legislators who passed this law have to stand re-election next Fall? If they do, we have a lot to do to help support those who voted to decriminalize. Otherwise, voters may turn them out of office, replacing them with legislators who will vote to repeal the law before it even takes effect.

Decriminalization, if achieved, will be a vital first step in the long process we must pursue and develop: elimination, legislatively, of all forms of discrimination against homosexuals in employment, housing and forced institutionalization. The U.S. Congress, with the signature of President Ford, shall and must enact necessary legislation to do this throughout the country, by the first of next January at the latest. If this is not done, we must re-assess our position. Perhaps it would be necessary to organize our survival in a very hostile, aggressive society, whose government at every level, supports extra-legal and illegal persecution and "destruction" of us, denying us Due Process of Law. While it is truly encouraging to learn that A.C.L.U. is supporting reform at the national level, it is late in the day! Maybe better late than never. We shall see.

Survival may depend on our ability to hide or be hidden, to buy large properties which we are prepared to defend, legally, or by force, to develop these for our own uses, our own economic growth and development, as a group, totally self-sufficient and autonomous, with our own code of behavior, our own legal framework, our own nation, if you will, carved right out

of this nation. If they do not want us, we must want ourselves enough to reject them far more forcefully than they could ever reject us- The Black Muslim Movement, in many ways, could be our model.

I have always believed that all people on this earth must live together, co-operating and working together, toward the same broad goals, regardless of their various differences. Diversities among people are natural and wonderful, and they should in no way divide people, or separate them from each other. But if we are rejected and denied, longer than January, 1976, I am prepared fully and hopefully to separate from the larger society, in order that we together may form our own society, excluding all, shut off from all, but but ourselves, those of our own persuasion.

I have faith in the basic decency of the American people to treat us fairly and justly, but I do not deceive myself to suppose that those same decent people are not also capable of the most abusive and stupidly cruel behavior toward the "scapegoats". I share your joy and hope. Only our most positive beauty of strength, courage and purpose can counter the ugliness of the negativeness which could meet us at every hand-

The struggle is just begun!

Affection from your Milo

?????

THE FOLLOWING LETTER was sent to the Portland Press Herald, which, for reasons best known to itself, chose not to print it. We thought it a fine piece of commentary on some of the correspondence in that journal, so we share it with you here.

To the Editor,

Maine persons generally debate an issue with a certain degree of intelligence and calm. It is disconcerting, therefore, to find critics of homosexuality discoursing heatedly from a plateau of ignorance and bewilderment. Phrases such as "the homo thing," "these perverts," "organized debauchery societies," "slap-happy unrestrained immorals" have appeared on this page during the last several weeks, and unfortunately, it is understandable.

Many of the self-styled critics consider themselves sex experts because they have experienced or-

(cont. next p.)

LETTERS (cont.)

gasm and understand the physiology of reproduction. Qualified by this "expertise," they declare with considerable emotion that homosexuality is an illness, a sin, and a crime. Still, this is not surprising. We have been brought up on a series of rather absurd myths about homosexual acts and the myths really are frightening. In trying to narrow the possibilities of human sexual potential, the myths distort reality. And they terrify people candid (or honest) enough to acknowledge that anyone, including themselves, can express sexuality through a homosexual act.

The myth says that people may be accurately classified as either heterosexuals or homosexuals, in much the same way as they may be labeled brown-eyed or blue-eyed. Unfortunately this myth obscures the basic fact that throughout life a human being may freely engage in any combination of heterosexual actions, homosexual actions, and autoerotic actions. Characterizing persons as homosexuals or heterosexuals might make sense to rigidly programmed individuals, but it leaves much to be desired as a description of humanity as the unique, rationally free animal.

Persons who write letters to the editor using a phrase like "the homo thing" show us that they are unable to transcend their own subservience to the myth. They remain submerged in a social system that confines the uses of sex within broad but nonetheless generally procreation-oriented and thus dominantly heterosexual boundaries. These judgments seem absolute when one accepts a certain total system as essentially an unalterable or "given" reality. Yet it is our very nature to alter apparent "givens" progressively.

Our future will be one wherein sex is linked to procreation even less than it is now. Our survival will depend on ecological and nuclear sanity, to name just two critical areas. In the future, sexuality -- no longer ruled by the procreative norm -- will have to be judged on its own merits. The merits will be evaluated in terms of their possibilities for contributing to human happiness and experience. The myth of labels will be irrelevant along with its corollary

that says that homosexuality and heterosexuality are somehow opposites, mutually exclusive. Homosexual acts will be seen as merely one sexual possibility among several open to every person, so long as he or she is not inhibited by contrary programming. Then such acts will be placed in their proper perspective and judged on their own merits.

Only then can we hope to be spared the simplistic criticisms of individuals who demonstrate that they have no real understanding of homosexuality because their total social programming leaves them powerless to understand it.

Sincerely,

John C. Winthrop

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GAY MILITARY PEOPLE: GCN (19 July) informs us that another Gay service person, Rudolf S. (Skip) Keath, a Black Air Force sergeant, has joined PFC Randolph, PV2 Watson, Sgt. Matlovich, and other Gay service people in coming out and challenging the Defense Department's discrimination against Gay people, especially those in the armed forces. As Arlo Guthrie said, "If three of you go down and do it, they think it's a movement." The GCN reporter, Neil Miller, asked Dr. Franklin Kameny of the Mattachine Society of Washington and long-time campaigner against homophobia in the Federal Government, what his advice would be to Gay service people facing investigation. Kameny replied, "Say nothing, sign nothing, get counsel, fight back." He continued that the most important thing was to get a lawyer and demand the discharge hearing that every service person is entitled to. The worst thing one can do is to admit or sign anything; this will "gravely inhibit" one's chances of remaining in the service or getting an honorable discharge. A less-than-honorable discharge can ruin forever after one's chances of getting many good jobs.

* * * * *

'BITS'

ATTENTION: The following PRISONERS need outside support. Write to them with news and strength:

James Sanders, Jr. B# 019517
P.O. Box 747 P-2-N-3
Starke, Fla. 32091

Robert L. Lowe 141-92
P.O. Box 69
London, Ohio 43140

Jo B. Williams 025803
P.O. Box 747 P-2-N12
Starke, Fla. 32091

Henry James Johnson
P.O. Box 747 #036156 K-2/N-3
Starke, Fla. 32091

Leonard Stroble, 036304
Florida State Prison
P.O. Box 747
Starke, Fla. 32091

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LESBIAN POETS WANTED to contribute to a new anthology, Amazon Poetry: An Anthology, to be published in the fall of 1975. Poems should be sent typed on 8½ by 11 paper to Amazon Poetry, 196 Third St., Brooklyn, NY, 11215.

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XXXXXXX

The 124th annual meeting of the A.M.A. adopted a resolution calling for the repeal of laws against non-commercial sexual conduct between consenting adults, aimed chiefly at laws concerning homosexuals. We wonder how the good doctors will follow through; how strong is their resolve????

* * * * *

BOYCOTT WELLS/OGUNQUIT!!!!!!

* * * * *

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XXXXXXXXXXXXXX

The Board of Trustees of the University of Maine received in June the annual Academic Freedom Award of the American Association of University Professors for supporting Symposium I amid intense public and political pressure and for defying Longley's retrenchment policies and a request that they all resign. The Association's Maine chapter, in nomination the board for the award, cited its role in protecting the rights of free assembly and speech by defending the Wilde-Stein Club's sponsorship of the statewide Gay conference in 1974.

XXXXXXXXXXXXXX

ATTENTION, LESBIAN SEPARATISTS! A Lesbian separatist quarterly, Dyke, will commence publication in the fall of this year. Charter subscriptions \$5.00 till 30 Nov., 1975; \$8.00 thereafter. All topics of interest to Dykes will be covered. Everyone who works for Dyke will be paid; regular correspondents will receive free subs as payment. Contact Tomato Publications, 70 Barrow St., New York, NY, 10014, Room 1R.

GAY RAP GROUP ***** GAY RAP GROUP

GAY RAP GROUP

Every Friday night--7:30 pm
MGTF Office 193 Middle Street
Portland. If door is locked, call 773-5530. Everybody welcome.

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I'm female, 27, have a dog & cat. I'm looking for a person with whom to find and share a moderately-priced rental, rural or waterfront house. I'm reasonable, easy to live with, like close friends, and am looking for a long-term living arrangement. Gerri Merola 865-3422

* * * * *

THIS SPACE IS TOO SMALL TO GET
TACKY.